God Lord of all. Commonwealth

V

A SERMON PREACHED IN LONDON BY

A FAITHFVLL MINISTER OF CHRIST. Mr Geo: Walker

Pauson of St. John Evangelist in Friday Street in London

AND PERFECTED BY HIM:

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AND NOW SET

FORTH TO THE PVBLIKE VIEW, OF ALL, FOR THE IVSTIFICATION of the Truth, and clearing the Innocencie of his long suffering for it, divers years. or much miseries &c.

Act. 5. 29.

We ought to obey God rather then men.

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See some acct of Georgs Walker in Anth. Wood. Vol. 1st Fasti. p. 219

Will Walker

Printed by Margery Mar-Prelate. 1642.

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GEN. 3. 17.

Because thou hast hearkned to the voyce of thy wife, and hast eaten of the Tree of which I commanded, saying, Thou shalt not eate of it, cursed is the ground, &c.

WHen *Adams* eating of the forbidden Fruit, was so manifest by his nakednesse, shame, and feare of *Gods* presence, that he could not hide it, nor deny it, Hee had no excuse but one, to this, That the Woman whom God had given to be an helpe meet for him, Shee gave him of the Tree and he did eate, *vers.* 11. Some perhaps will thinke that this was a sufficient excuse for *Adams* part, for why should not he respect her, and hearken to her voyce whom God had given him for a meet helpe? What affection of men and women one to another can be so great as the affection of *Adam* to his wife? *She was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, chap.* 2. 23. framed and made of a rib taken out of his side, in the same Image of God with him,

and was his second selfe, the Queene and Lady of the inferiour Worlds, who had with him equall dominion and rule over all visible creatures in the earth, and in the Sea; why then should not Adam be excused for his eating, seeing hee did it not of himselfe, nor by the perswasion and example of any other, but only by his wife, and out of respect and affection to her, and to her words and voice. But the *Text* here shewes, that no such excuse could free him from the foul staine of sinne in the eyes of God the righteous judge of all the earth. For as the eating it selfe contrary to Gods Commandment, so the hearkning to the voyce of his wife, and respecting her and her perswasion more then the Word of God, is laid to his charge as a sin, and an heavie curse is laid on the ground for his sake, and many grievous paines and sorrowes on him and all his posterity, yea and death it selfe also, as a just punishment of his transgressions; *Because thou hast hearkned* (saith God) *to the voyce of thy wife, &c.* Cursed is the ground for thy sake. The consideration whereof offers to us this generall Doctrine.

Doct. That no affection or respect to any man, no word, commandment, or threatning of greatest Kings and Potentates, no perswasion of them that are most neere and deare, no importunity of them to whom men are most obliged in love and duty for many great favours, can excuse any act which thereby they are drawne to doe against the commandement of God, from the foule staine of sinne, nor the doers of such an act, from the guilt of sinfull transgression: or to expresse it in fewer words briefly, No affection of one man to another, whether feare or dread of Superiours, or reverence of Benefactors, or love of them that are most neer and deare, can excuse any person from the guilt of sinne before God, when by them he is moved and drawne to doe a thing which God hath forbidden in his Word and Law.

If any such affection or respect could excuse any unlawfull act before God, then had *Adams* excuse been very good, for the reasons before named, (*viz.*) because hee did eate by the perswasion of his wife, who deserved more love and respect at his hand then any frayle sinfull person of all his posterity can be worthy of, or expect at the hand of any other: But this excuse was of no force with God (as heere wee see) that great and righteous Judge, whose will is Law, and the rule of Justice, pronounceth him guilty and worthy of death, and

of all the paines, ſorrowes and puniſhments which are expreſſed in this verſe, and the two next following: And this God is no reſpecter of perſons, but moſt juſt to all without partiality to any. Wherefore this Doctrine holds moſt true, firme and ſure, among all men, even all *Adams* poſterity of all ages, and in all Nations of the World.

For the further illuſtration whereof, and confirming of our hearts in the truth and ſtedfaſt beliefe of it, wee have the plaine word and teſtimony of God himſelfe in his Law, *Deut.* 13. Where hee gives a ſtrict charge to all his people, under greateſt penalties, to take heede, that neither reverence and reſpect of extraordinary Prophets which have certainely foretold before-hand things which afterwards have come to paſſe, nor the love and affection of any one to his brother, the ſonne of his Mother, or to his wife which lyeth in his boſome, doe at any time draw them into the tranſgreſſion of his Law by worſhipping other Gods: And if a whole City be ſeduced by ſome wicked perſon, and drawne to ſerve ſtrange Gods, and the people thereof be found to commit Idolatry, (in which Caſes many are moved and drawne out of affection and reſpect, Some to *Superiours*, ſome to *Parents* or *Maſters*, ſome to *Husbands*, or *Wives*, or *Brethren*, or *Friends*, and *Benefactors*) the Lord declares all to bee deeply guilty, foulely ſtained, and worthy of death, out of what affection or reſpect ſoever they are drawne to ſerve Falſe Gods, and adjudgeth them all to the ſword; For he commandeth the whole Nation of his people, to deſtroy every ſoule therein with the edge of the Sword, and to burne all the ſubſtance thereof as a curſed thing, and to make the Citie an heape, for a terrour to all others. 13. 6. 8.

Thus wee ſee God in his Law admits no excuſe or plea for the breach of his Commandement, whether men plead, that the feare and Commandement of Superiours, (as Judges, Magiſtrates, Parents, or Maſters, or love and reſpect of Husbands, Wives, Brethren, Benefactors, and deareſt Friends, or reverence of extraordinary Prophets, and Teachers eſteemed for men of God) did move and perſwade them, they ſhall not be found nor judged innocent. And to this purpoſe are thoſe words of God in the body of the morall Law in the ſecond Precept, where he forbids making of any Image, of any thing in Heaven or Earth, to bow downe to it, or to worſhip it, as being a ſimilitude of him, or a ſigne of his

divine power and presence; *I am* (saith he) *a jealous God, and visit the sinnes of the Fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.* Marke the words; First, the Lord saith, *I am a jealous God.* Now jealousie is the indignation and wrath of some person against those who with-hold and with-draw from him that love and respect which is due to him, and bestow it on others who doe not deserve it, and to whom it is not due: As for example; when a wife bestowes the love and affection due to her husband upon other men, this provokes him to jealousie, and fills him with anger and indignation against her and her lovers.

Here God compares himselfe to such a person; saying, I am a jealous God, which is all one in effect, as if hee had said, *I* am the Lord, the Creator of all things, there is no God besides me, no religious or divine worship is to be given to any but to me alone; and therefore, whosoever gives such honour to any besides me, and doth breake any of my Commandements out of feare, love, or other affection and respect to any creature whatsoever, hee provokes me to jealousie: And then, what followes? I will (saith he) visit the sinnes of the Fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that thus hate me.

Now the meaning of these words is not, that hee will punish the innocent children for the Idolary of the Parents, For hee is the righteous Judge of all the earth, hee will not destroy the righteous and innocent with the wicked and the guilty, *Gen.* 8. 25. He himselfe protesteth with an oath, That the Father shall not dye for the Child, nor the Child for the Father, for all soules (saith hee) are mine, the soule of the Child as well as the soule of the Father, *Ezek.* 18. How then can this saying stand, that he will visit the sinnes of the Fathers on the Children to the third and fourth generation? Surely the meaning is, That because men often times live to see their Children and their Childrens children to the third and fourth generation, and if they be wicked Idolaters, haters of the true God, they are examples of evill to their Children, and by exhortations, commandements, and examples draw such Children to commit the same sinnes, and their Children are led by affection and respect of their evill wayes. And hence it is that the Fathers sinnes becomes the sinnes of their children, and the sinnes which the Children commit in imitation, and by the perswasion of their Fathers, are called

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the sins of the Fathers: And it is no excuse of the Children, that the example, and their respect of their Parents did draw them to follow their wayes, but the Lord in fury and jealousie will proceed against them as hatefull sinners, and will visit their sinnes upon them: And least any should thinke or imagine, that the justice of God is not so strict in this point now under the Gospel, but the rigour thereof is much remitted: Wee have a most cleare testimony from the mouth of the chiefest Evangelicall Preachers and Publishers of the Gospel; the holy Apostles, wherewith joynt consent and one voyce they protest, that they might not for feare of men, nor upon the commands and threatnings of the chiefe Rulers in the Church and State of *Israel* transgresse the Commandement of *Christ*, and by obeying men, disobey *God*, *Acts* 4.19. and 5.29. Yea, though their preaching of the Gospel publikely in the Temple (as the Angel commanded them from *God*, *Acts* 5.20.) and to all the people in all publike Assemblies and their proclaiming of the *Lord Christ* (whom *Pilate* by instigation of the High-priests and Elders had condemned, crucified, and slaine) and their declaring of him to be the just and holy one of *God*, and the Redeemer promised to the Fathers, was no lesse then *Scandalum Magnatum* in the highest degree, for hereby they brought the bloud of *Christ* on *Pilate* the Chiefe Governour of the *Romans*, and on them the chiefe Rulers of the people, and in that respect they did out of State-policie charge them, and straightly command them, not to preach any more in the Name of Christ, as our Saviour had commanded them, *Matth.* 28.19. Yet *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles answered resolutely, We ought to obey God rather then you; and they appealed to themselves (though most unjust adversaries) to judge whether it were not right so to doe: And therefore it is as great a sinne now under the Gospel, as it was under the Law, to breake Gods Commandements, for feare, or any other affection or respect of men, or upon the commandements and threatnings of the greatest Kings and Potentates.

If you will yet see this Truth made more cleare and manifest, look into the examples of those severall persons, and also of those multitudes of people which are noted for great sinners, and were most severely punished for doing wicked acts, contrary to the Law of *God*, out of obedience to their Rulers, and at the commandement of their Kings who had power and authority over them; the holy Scriptures afford many examples

amples of this kind in severall places, where they commend Subjects and Children for refusing to obey their Superiours and Parents in things which they commanded against the Law of God; and condemne others for obeying such wicked commandements out of Feare, or for any other respect.

When King *Saul* commanded *Ionathan* his sonne and all his servants that they should wait for an opportunity to slay *David* his innocent servant and sonne in Law, and Gods great and Noble Champion, he had a faire pretence of State-policie for it (to wit) that *David* did steale away the hearts of his people, and aspired to the Kingdome, and sought to depose him and to disinherit his sonnes: But because *Ionathan* feared God, hee would not obey his Father in murthering an innocent, contrary to Gods Law, but used all meanes that he could devise to discover his Fathers wicked purposes to *David*, and to reserve him out of his cruell hands; and this disobeying of the word and threatnings of the King, his Father commanding him to slay an innocent, is highly commended in *Ionathan*, and recorded for his praise and honour in the Holy History, 1 *Sam.* 19. So likwise we read that *Ionathan* did ignorantly breake his Fathers rash and fooliſh vow before he knew it, by eating honey which God unexpectedly offered to him when hee was faint and weary in his pursuit of the *Philistines*, whom hee and his Armour-bearer had rowted and put to flight, and thereby brought great deliverance to *Israel*; and when King *Saul* his Father for this act done out of inuicible ignorance, adjudged him to death, and swore with a great oath, that hee should dye; the people of *Israel* his Subjects fearing God more then his anger, did not onely abhorre the act, and refuse to yeeld to his commandement, which had some shew and pretence of Religion, but also did stand out and oppose themselves against it, and did save and rescue *Ionathan* out of his hands, saying, *God forbid that Ionathan should dye, As the Lord liveth there shall not one haire fall from his head to the ground, for hee hath wrought with God this day*, 1 *Sam.* 14. 45. Which speech of theirs implies, that it had been a great sinne to slay *Ionathan*, as *Saul* their King commanded, or to suffer him to dye for such a cause.

But the most pregnant example of all is that of *Doeg* the *Edomite*, *Sauls* chiefe Heardsman, 1 *Sam.* 22. where wee read that when King *Saul* commanded the men of his Guard, whom hee had obliged to him by many preferments and gifts, as his

his upbraiding words in the seaventh verse seeme to imply, that they should slay the Lords innocent Preists whome he out of false and unjust suspition and jelousy supposed to conspire with *David* against him, they would not put forth their hands to fall upon them, as the Text saith verse. 17. and *Doeg* the *Edomite* who at the Kings Commandement slue the Preists and mangled and murthered their wives, and children and innocent Sucklings, and like a bloudy oppressing Tyrant spoyled their City and all their substance, is by the Spirit of God in the mouth of *David* cursed with most dreadfull curses, though hee did these things in obedience to the King his Lord, upon whose favour all his preferment did depend, the sentence of judgement passed upon him, *Psal.* 52. that God would destroy him for ever, pluck him out of his dwelling, and root him out of the Land of the living, doth most plainely shew, that his Act was a most heinous sinne and wickednesse.

In like manner when *Ieroboam* commanded the *Israelites* who had chosen him for their King, to worship God who brought them out of *Ægypt* in the Images of golden Calves, such as *Aaron* had before made at Mount *Horeb*, it is said in the Text, that he made them to sinne, his Commandement did not excuse them, and their worship of Images, neither did God spare to punish them for it, but (as the Prophet *Hosea* testifieth, *cap.* 5. 11.) *Ephraim*, (that is, the *Israelites* of the ten Tribes) was oppressed and broken in judgement, because he willingly walked after the Commandement (that is) of *Ieroboam*, and also of *Baasha*, and other wicked Kings, who walked in the wayes of *Ieroboam*, and made *Israel* to sinne. And although *Omri*, *Ahab*, and *Iezabel* were cruell Tyrants, and by Statutes, tyrannicall commands, terrours, threatnings, and slaughter of the Lords Prophets, teachers of Gods true worship, did not onely draw, but drive and force *Israel* their people and subjects to worship *Baal*, yet this excused not the peoples Idolatry, but the Lord threatens them by the Prophet *Micha* 6. 16. that because they kept the Statutes of *Omri*, and walked in the counsels and wayes of the house of *Ahab*, therefore hee will make the Land a desolation, and an hissing and reproach; and for their forsaking of Gods covenant, and worshipping of *Baal*, Idols and Groves, *Elias* the man of God accuseth them all as great offenders deeply guilty, saying, *The Children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant and broken downe thine Altars*, 1 King. 19. 14. And God in his answer to *Elias* accusation exempts none from the guilt

of theſe ſinnes in all *Iſrael*, but onely thoſe ſeveven thouſand men who had not been drawne by the terrours, threatnings, and cruell commands of *Ahab* and *Iezabel* to worſhip *Baal*, but had kept their knees from bowing to him, and their mouthes from kiſſing him, as we ſee *verſ.* 18. What man can plead more plauſible for any diſobedience to any Commandement of *God*, then the man of God which came from *Iudah* to *Bethel* to propheſie againſt *Ieroboams* Altar, might plead for his eating bread and drinking water in that wicked Idolatrous place, contrary to Gods particular Commandement given to him; Firſt, the thing forbidden, was a matter in it ſelfe very indifferent, there was no appearance of any evill in it, ſo long as he did not eate and drinke with infectious and infamous Idolaters which might be a ſnare and ſcandall to him: Secondly, his reſolution and endeavour to keep this Commandement was ſuch that when King *Ieroboam* thankfully inuited him to eate and drinke out of kindneſſe for healing his withered hand, he could not be overcome with any intreaty, nor promiſe of great gifts and rewards. Thirdly, when he was ſeduced and drawne to eate and drinke in the place forbidden, it was the authority of the old Prophet, and his reſpect to his words which he confidently affirmed to be the words of God which perſwaded him to returne with him and to eate bread with him; and yet all this could not excuſe this man of God from ſinne in doing contrary to Gods Commandement given to him, for God preſently makes the old Prophet which deceived him, a Meſſenger of death to declare unto him his untimely death for his diſobedience, and that his dead carkaſſe torne by a Lyon ſhould not come to the Sepulchre of his Fathers, 1 *King.* 13. Whereby it is manifeſt that no power or authority of any man how fairely ſoever it is pretended to be from God can excuſe any act done againſt any knowne Commandement of God, though it be a Commandement of a ſmall indifferent thing, given onely to try mans obedience, but whoſoever upon any reſpect to any creature, or by any perſwaſion doth tranſgreſſe any Precept or word of *God*, he is guilty of ſinne and worthy of death before *Gods* juſt Tribunall: *Sauls* letters from the High-prieſts which gave him a Commiſſion and authority to perſecute Chriſtians did not excuſe him from ſin though he did it in ignorance and blind zeale, for he calls himſelfe the greateſt of ſinners for that act of perſecution, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. But I hold it needleſſe to ſpend time in reherſing more examples to prove this doctrine, though

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it is of all Doctrines the chiefeſt and moſt neceſſary to be beleeved, continually kept in mind, and obſerved of all *Adams* poſterity. I will onely adde one ſtrong and invincible argument and demonſtration to convince all men of the truth thereof grounded upon divers ſolid principles of Reaſon and Religion.

Reaſon.

Firſt, it is a thing which none but Atheiſts can or will deny, that when any creature ſtands in competition with God, and ſeekes to bee reſpected and obeyed before God, and to have his demands and commands yeelded unto, which are contrary to the will and Law of God, as he in that caſe ſeekes to rob God of his due honour and glory, and to exalt himſelfe above God, which is *Luciferian* pride & rebellion; ſo they who in ſuch a caſe obey him, whether for feare, or love, or any reſpect and affection in a thing contrary to any Word or Commandement of God, they do undoubtedly rob God of his glory and of the honour which properly belongs to him, for God as the Creator of all things, and giver of being, life and breath to all creatures ſeverally, who alſo upholds and preſerves them all in being and well being, and ſuſtaines them by his providence; ſo he is the chiefe Father of all, worthy to be reſpected, loved, and obeyed above all other Parents and Benefactors, who are but inſtruments of his bounty, and ſubordinate meanes of our being and other benefits: He alſo by the right both of Creation, and alſo of redemption is the chiefe King, Lord, owner and poſſeſſor of all things in heaven and earth, to whom all hearts, hands, wills, deſires and affections ought to be ſubject and obedient in all things, and at all times. Beſides, if we conſider God in himſelfe as he is revealed in his word and workes to be the one only true Jehovah, eternall, omnipotent, immortal, immutable, infinite in goodneſſe, bounty, wiſdome, mercy, juſtice, faithfulneſſe and truth, moſt mighty wiſe and prudent to order, rule and governe all the world, moſt bountifull to reward all obedience, and moſt juſt to puniſh, and dreadfull and terrible in revenging all diſobedience againſt his Word and Law; Wee cannot but acknowledge and confeſſe, that hee is the ſupreame Lord of all Lords, King of Kings, and the eternally bleſſed and onely Potentate, who is in all things to bee obeyed above all, and before all; and all Lords, Kings, Fathers, and Benefactors are to bee obeyed onely in and under him as his Subſtitutes,

ſubordinate Vicegerents, Stewards, and Meſſengers, whoſoever doe, out of feare, love, or any affection and reſpect to any creature, doe any thing contrary to his owne will, word and commandement, they rob him of his honour and glory, ſet up the creature above the Creator, and make it their God, which muſt needes by all reaſonable men be confeſſed to be a moſt heinous and grievous ſinne worthy of Gods wrath and all puniſhments. This is the ſolid argument and invincible demonſtration which fully proves the Doctrine, which I will briefly reduce into the ſtrict forme of a Sylogiſme, thus,

Whoſoever robs the King, and Lord of Lords, the bleſſed and onely Potentate and cheife Father and Authour of all being, goodneſſe, and bounty, by taking from him the honour and glory which doth properly belong to him, and ſetteth up the creature and ſervant above his Lord and Creator, he is guilty of moſt heinous ſinne and tranſgreſſion.

Every one who out of feare, love, or any affection and reſpect to any creature, doth any act contrary to the revealed will, word, and Commandement of God, robbeth thereby God the ſupream Lord, King, Father, and Benefactor, and ſetteth up the creature and ſervant above his Lord and Creator.

Therefore he is guilty in this of heinous ſinne and tranſgreſſion; and by conſequence it followeth neceſſarily, that (as this Doctrine teacheth) no feare, threatning, or commandement of earthly Potentates, no love, or reſpect of Parents and Benefactors can free from the foule ſtaine of ſinne in any act, which they draw men to doe contrary to the Commandements of God.

Vſe 1.

This Doctrine is of ſpeciall uſe: Firſt, to admoniſh all Gods people to be carefull and diligent above all to know and acknowledge God aright, and to ſet their hearts and affections chiefly on him as the ſupreme Lord and Father of all, and the cheife Author and Fountaine of all goodneſſe, and to put on a ſetled reſolution to obey all his Commandements, though all the world ſhould perſwade & command them to the contrary. It is true that Kings, Rulers, and Potentates of the world are ſet up by God to rule by him and under him, as his Vice-gerents, Stewards, and Meſſengers, and all men who are under them, eſpecially Chriſtians (Gods free and willing people) ought to give them all honour and reverence, and to feare and obey them for conſcience ſake in and under God; the very law of Nature binds all men to love, reverence, honour and obey their

their Parents and Benefactors, who are Gods instruments of their being and well being; and not onely Civility and the Common Law of Nations bindes men to honour and respect them who are honourable in wisdome, gravity, and authority, but Religion and Gods Word teach men to honour and affect such as are Prophets, Preachers, Embassadours and Messengers of God unto them: But yet all these are to be loved, feared honoured and respected in and under God, and with feare, love, and affection subordinate to the feare, love, and affection which they have towards God above all: Wherefore let all Gods people take heed and beware, and carefully looke to it, that they give not too much way to humane passions and affections by regarding and respecting secondary meanes and inferiour causes more then God the first and chiefe cause, Author and Fountaine of all blessings, or by accustoming themselves to esteeme too highly, or to love, feare and admire too excessively the persons of men, how great, wise, and learned, or how amiable and honourable soever they appeare in their eyes; If men once give way so far to the reverence, awe, feare, and dread of earthly Kings, Rulers and Potentates, that they become more affraid of their faces, angry countenances, menacing and threatnings, then of the terrours of Gods Law and of his wrathfull judgements; this is that which will draw them to disobey Gods Word and Law, out of respect to mortall men, and will bring them under the staine and guilt of unexcusable sinne laid open in this Text and Doctrine: So likewise excessive love, carnall affection, and respect of Parents and Benefactors (while men set their eyes and hearts on the things which are visible and sensible, and on the outward meanes more then on the invisible hand, power and goodnesse of God) may easily supplant them and make them fall in like sort into heinous sinne and inexcusable transgression: But most dangerous of all is that superstitious feare, reverence and respect which men out of blind and undiscreet zeale without knowledge doe shew to such as are set over them to rule and direct them in things which concerne God, Religion, and godlinesse, and hold the place of Prophets, Messengers, Bishops, wise Pastors and learned Teachers in Gods Church; when men are so enthralled in their wills, and become Slaves in their affections, that they are ready to beleeve and embrace whatsoever they hold and teach without proofe from Gods Word, or examination of things taught by the word or consent

with the word and rule of Faith, they are in the high way to horrible and dangerous errours and disobedience to the Law of God, into which whosoever fall being led by immoderate affection and more then due respect to any persons whatsoever, he may here learne from Gods proceeding against *Adam* (the common Father and root of all mankinde) that *God* will admit no excuse for breaking any of his Commandements out of any respect, or any feare, reverence, love or affection to any persons, how great, wise, learned, honourable or amiable soever they appeare to him. As *Adam* by his excuse could not turne away the guilt and punishment of his disobedience, but had a curse laid on the ground, and all paines, sorrowes and death it selfe on himselfe and all his posterity: So it shall fare with all *Adams* seed and children in the like case, For there is no respect of persons with *God*.

Vse 2. Secondly, this Doctrine discovers unto us abundance of error in the judgements, and iniquity in the practice of many worldly-wise and learned men, especially in those State-polititians, admirers of worldly power, greatnesse and authority, who doe thinke and hold, that they may lawfully doe things commanded by such as have the rule over them, without examining whether they be allowed or forbidden in the Law of *God*. If Kings and great Potentates command them under great penalties, as losse of goods, liberty, or lives, torturing, imprisoning and death to make Images of God, and to bow down to images and Altars of wood and stone, and to practice superstitious will-worship, or to do as proud and potent *Nebuchadnezar* commanded all his people to worship his Image under paine of burning to ashes in an hot firie Furnace: Or if a law and decree were made (like that which *Darius* made by the advice of his wicked and malicious Princes) for a snare to Gods people, forbidding the true worship of God. It is the common opinion of self-conceited worldlings abundantly wise and politick in their own opinion, that there is no danger in obeying, no feare of unexcusable sin, and that they who are afraid to obey such commands, and to stirre their consciences with guilt of sin by breaking Gods Law, are too scrupulous, worthy of contempt; yea that they are mad men, who in such cases wil hazard their lives, goods, or liberty. But the 3. faithfull servants of God, full of the holy Spirit were of a contrary opinion and resolution, (as *Dan.* 3.) Though *Nebuchadnezar* was a mighty Potentate, and had highly promoted them to honour and dignity, and the thing

thing which he commanded was only to fall downe and worſhip his golden Image, yet they utterly refuſed to doe ſuch an act forbiden in Gods Law, and did rather chuſe to yeeld their bodies to death and to be burned in his hot fiery Furnace: And ſo likewiſe *Daniel* that holy ſeruant of God, ſo famous in his time for learning wiſdome and favour with God, he regarded not the Decree of the wicked Princes which reſtrained him from the worſhip of his God and from praing to him for the ſpace of thirty dayes under paine of being caſt into the den of Lions, but notwithſtanding it was confirmed by his great Lord and King Darius and ſealed with his Seale, he would not refraine from his conſtant courſe & cuſtom of prayer and worſhip of his God, wich he knew to be a duety daly and continually required by the divine Law, and did chuſe rather to forgoe all the honours and promotions which the King had beſtowed on him, and to be caſt into the den of Lions, then to diſobey Gods Commandement by obeying the Kings decree: and ſuch hath the opinion, reſolution and practice of all Gods noble Wortheys and faithful ſerevants been in all ages. Wherefore let me here be bold to ſpend ſome few words in arguing againſt, and conuincing the blind carnal wicked world, and in diſcovering that wiſdome which is commonly callen State-policy, to be folly and enmity againſt God, which I wil do very breifly by anſwering and taking away thoſe fooliſh excuſes of carnal men which are as vaine and unable to ſhroud and defend them from the ſtaine of ſin and Gods juſt wrath, as the fig-leaves patched together by our firſt parents were unfit to cover their nakedneſs.

Some when they are commanded by great Potentates & cruell Tyrants to worſhip God in Images and in Altars of wood and ſtone or the like, or are forbidden to profeſſe the truth and true religion and to practice the holy worſhip of God, that under pain of death, perſecution, impriſonment, ſpoyling of their goods, and loſſe of all worldly ſubſtance, they are very forward and earneſt to plead, that authority muſt be obeyed & the powers muſt not be reſiſted, and that it is no wiſedome to undergoe loſſe of goods, liberty and life for conſcience and needleſſe fear of breaking Gods Commandements! But let me tell ſuch pleaders, that *Ephraim*, & the *Iſraelits* of the *ten Tribes* had as good a plea, and the ſame excuſe for their forſaking of the Covenant of the Lord, & for worſhipping of *Baal*, Calves, Idols & Groves, in the daies of *Ieroboam*, *Ahab* & other wicked kings, their Kings did comaund them ſo to do for a politike reaſon of ſtate even to keepe

keep them from going up to worship God at *Ierusalem*, lest by that means they might be drawne away and revolt to the house of *Dauid*, and reunite themselves to the Kingdome of *Iudah*: Also some of their Kings were cruell Tyrants which persecuted the true Prophets and worshippers of God, and by feare of death and other great penalties forced and compelled men to commit Idolatry, as we read in the dayes of *Ahab* and *Iezabel*, and as appeares by *Eliahs* complaint unto God, 1 *King.* 19. And yet this was no excuse of the peoples Idolatry and sinne, for *Ephraim* was oppressed and broken in judgement because hee willingly walked after *Ieroboams* commandement, as *Hosea* testifieth, *Hos.* 5. 11. And because they kept the Statutes of *Omri*, doing the workes of the house of *Ahab*, and walking in their counsels, the Lord gives this sentence against them by the Prophet *Micha*, *That he will make their land a desolation, and them an hissing and reproach*, *Micha* 6. 16. Our Saviour in the Gospel discovers to us how vaine and frivolous all such excuses will be found before his Tribunall, where hee saith, that whosoever loves houses, lands, goods, or life it selfe more then him, insomuch that they will rather deny, and not confesse him before men, then indanger or lose their life, liberty, or wordly goods, they are not worthy to be counted his Disciples, and hee will deny them in the presence of his Father and before his holy Angels; and as they feared them who could kill the body only and were not able to kill the soule, more then *God* who could destroy both soule and body in hell; so they shall lose their life which they loved more then him. they shall also be excluded from life eternall, and so cast wholly both soules and bodies into hell, into the fire which never shall be quenched, and dye and perish eternally, *Matth.* 10. 28. *Mark* 8. 35. *Luk.* 9. 24. Secondly, whereas oathes are to be given and taken in truth, in judgement, and righteousnesse, *Ier.* 4. 2. That is, men must not sweare any false thing but onely what is true, neither to raise up strife, nor to doe injury, or to hurt any man, but to put an end to strife by laying open in judgement things as they are, neither must they bind themselves by oath to doe any vain, unjust or wicked thing against Christian charity, or to execute any unlawfull office. Now there are and have been in all ages divers politick worldlings and cowardly Hypocrites, who when vaine or sinfull oathes are imposed on them, such as the Elders and Nobles of *Israel* imposed on the wicked men whom they set up to sweare falsely, that *Naboth* blasphemed

God

God and the King; or ſuch as the *Iewes* tooke to kill *Paul*, *Act.* 23. 12. or ſuch as Traytors take to conceale or act Treaſons; or as many corrupt men take to execute unlawfull offices and unjuſt deſignes, which are hurtfull and injurious to divers others either in Church or Common-wealth. If theſe oathes be impoſed by men of authority, who rule over them, or under great penalties, as trouble, vexation, impriſonment, and loſſe of liberty, or with hope of ſome preferment, profit, and gaine, which they may reape by executing an unlawfull office; they are ready to plead for themſelves that they are excuſable, becauſe they did take ſuch oathes, and doe execute ſuch offices by command of Superiours and in obedience to authority, and that otherwiſe they ſhould forgoe a profitable office and trade which doth maintaine and enrich them and their Family, and ſhould be vexed, troubled, fined, impoveriſhed, impriſoned, and deprived of their libertie. But let mee anſwer ſuch in the words of Holy *Iob*, *chap.* 27. 8. *What is the hope of the Hypocrite that he hath gained, when God taketh away his ſoule? Wont will his gainefull office advantage him when God findeth and judgeth him guilty for prophaning his holy Ordinance and taking his Name in vaine?* Yea, our Saviour fully anſwereth ſuch Hypocrites, and diſcovereth the folly of ſuch worldly Politicians in expreſſe words, ſaying, *What is a man profited to gaine the whole World, and loſe his owne ſoule; or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoule.* Matth. 16. 26. All the liberty and freedome from bands and impriſonment, all the worldly profits, pleaſures, goods, and wealth which men purchaſe and procure to themſelves by their obſequious obſerving of great ones, and obeying the authority and commandements of men in things contrary to the Word and Law of *God*, will yeeld them no comfort at all, but rather adde to their torment in that flaming fire wherein God will render vengeance to them, and puniſh them with everlaſting deſtruction from his preſence and the glory of his power, and ſhut them up with the Devill and damned ſpirits in the priſon of blackneſſe and darkneſſe for ever world without end. Laſtly, whereas many who are wiſe in their owne conceit, and moſt politicke for the world and in wordly matters, when they are commanded as *Doeg* was by *Saul* his lawfull King to mangle, murder, and maſſacre the innocent ſervants of God, and to oppreſſe and ſpoile them of goods, lands and lives, as the Nobles of *Naboths* City were by *Iezabels* Letters written in *Ahabs* name

and ſealed with his Seale, or to execute cruell and bloudy ſentences given by Judges of unrighteouſneſſe under the name and colour of the Law, by haling to priſon, torturing and puniſhing Chriſtian people men and women; as *Saul* did when he was a perſecutor armed with Commiſſion and Letters from the High Prieſts, they perſwade themſelves and plead confidently, that it is no ſinne in them to doe ſuch things, though in themſelves moſt unjuſt and contrary to the Law of God, but that the ſinne and guilt lyes wholly on their Superiours, and on the Judges, which by their authority and imperious commands, doe impoſe upon them ſuch executions, and they the executioners ſhall never be called to account, nor undergoe the puniſhment of juſt revenge from God: Let all ſuch be admoniſhed by this Doctrine, that this their plea and perſwaſion will never excuſe them before God, but as they have an hand in wicked workes, and are executioners of cruell and ungodly ſentences, ſo they ſhall have their ſhare in the juſt puniſhments of ſuch heinous tranſgreſſions, and the righteous and ſupreme Judge will cauſe juſt vengeance to be executed on them alſo. It is true that ſeducers and perſwaders of others to ſinne, and all they who by their power and authority, feare and awe cauſe others to commit wickednes, as they are cheife Authours thereof next under the Divill, the Father of all iniquity, and the blood of thoſe whome they have ſeduced, compelled and cauſed to tranſgreſſe Gods holy Commandements, ſhall lye heavy upon them, and God will certainly require it at their hands, ſo ſhall they chiefly bear the curſe and puniſhment: But they who are ſeduced and led by them through blind obedience ſhall not eſcape, but ſhall alſo fall with them into the pit of deſtruction; And all they who are voluntarily inſtruments of cruell oppreſſion, violence, or any wickednesſe, they ſhall undoubtedly dye and periſh in thoſe ſinnes of which they are partakers with them, who ſet them on worke to doe wickedly, there is no way for them to eſcape Gods revenging curſe but by godly griefe and ſorrow to repentance, and by ſeeking and finding pardon in Chriſt. Wherefore behold your folly and wilfull madneſſe yee worldly Politicons who are ſo wiſe to worke your owne ruine, who by vaine excuſes and ſubtile fallacies of fleſhly reaſon doe blinde your owne eyes, and hardon your hearts not to repent; Alas! what comfort will it be to you that your great Lords whom you feared and obeyed, and the unrighteous Judges, whoſe cruell ſentences yee

executed,

executed, doe chiefely beare the curse and punishment of that cruelty, injustice, and iniquity, which they acted by your hands? what ease or mitigation of sorrow, paine, and griefe, will it be to you, that you see them leade the way and goe before you? when you also follow them at the heeles, and dance after them attendance unto Hell, there to remaine for ever in the lake which burnes with fire and brimstone, where the worme dyeth not, and the fire never goeth out, but burneth eternally, and is unquenchable world without end. From which wrath and eternall woe the Lord deliver us for his mercies sake, and through the meritorious satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Saviour; To whom with the Father and the blessed Spirit be all glory, honour and praise now and for ever.

Amen.

See of Margin
Tarlem

FINIS.